

REMARKS

The Applicants appreciate the thorough examination of the present application that is reflected in the Official Action of September 20, 2004. In response, independent claims 1, 17, and 27, and dependent claims 3-13, 15-16, 18-24, 26, 28-30, and 32-33 have been amended to emphasize various aspects of how clickstream data collection is carried out over a series of related messages that are exchanged between computers. Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are patentable for at least the reasons that will now be explained.

Claims 1-36 Are Patentable Over Landsman

As explained in the specification, "[b]usinesses need to understand how effective their Web sites are at communicating with their customers, suppliers, and employees". (Specification, page 2, lines 3-4.) This information may be determined by "collecting clickstream data that shows how users interact with the site content and then mapping this collected data back to the respective business processes involved". (Specification, page 2, lines 4-6.) However, determining what users were viewing based on clickstream data can be difficult because of an inability to distinguish between users due to, for example, Network Address Translation and virtual domain hosting, dynamic Web pages whose content cannot be inferred by the respective address of the HTTP request, and/or browsers that have been configured to disable use of cookies, Javascript, or other Web features. (See Specification, page 4, lines 2-13.)

Claims 1-36 are directed to transmitting information, over the course of a series of related message exchanges between a client and a server, that enables tracking an end user's navigation path on the server. In particular, amended independent Claim 1 recites (underlining added):

1. A method of providing improved clickstream data collection over a series of related messages exchanged between computers in a networking environment, comprising:
 - determining at a server computer a clickstream correlator value to be applied to related messages from a client computer;
 - annotating at the server computer at least one of the related messages from the client computer with information reflecting the determined clickstream correlator value; and
 - transmitting at least one of the annotated messages with the determined clickstream correlator value for delivery to the client computer;

receiving at the server computer the clickstream correlator value from the client computer with subsequent ones of the related messages; and
using the clickstream correlator value at the server computer to collect clickstream data that is indicative of how a user at the client computer interacts with content at the server computer.

Accordingly, a server computer determines a clickstream correlator value that is to be applied to related messages from a client computer. The server computer annotates related message(s) from the client computer with the clickstream correlator value, and transmits the annotated messages to the client computer. The client computer returns the clickstream correlator value to the server computer with subsequent ones of the related messages. The server computer then uses the clickstream correlator value to collect clickstream data that is indicative of how a user at the client computer interacts with content at the server computer.

Claims 1-36 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Sec. 103(a) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,314,451 to Landsman et al. ("Landsman").

Landsman is directed to a technique for implementing in a networked client-server environment, network-distributed advertising in which advertisements are downloaded, from an advertising server to a browser executing at a client computer, in a manner that is transparent to a user situated at the browser. (Landsman, Abstract, lines 1-6). The advertisements are then subsequently displayed, by that browser on an interstitial basis, in response to a click-stream generated by the user to move from one web page to the next. (Landsman, Abstract, lines 6-8). An HTML advertising tag is embedded into a referring web page. (Landsman, Abstract, lines 8-10). This advertising tag contains two components, one component downloads from a distribution web server and then persistently instantiates an AdController at the client browser. (Landsman, Abstract, lines 10-13). The other component is a reference, in terms of a web address, of the advertising management system. (Landsman, Abstract, lines 13-15). The ad management system selects the given advertisement that is to be downloaded, rather than having that selection or its content being embedded in the web content page. (Landsman, Abstract, lines 15-18).

Landsman does not teach or suggest a server computer that determines a clickstream correlator value that is to be applied to related messages from a client computer. The Office Action concedes that Landsman fails to disclose a clickstream correlator value, however it states that it would have been obvious to modify "Landsman by specifying advertisement tag[s] as correlator values since the same functionality of rendering the advertisement on web pages based on clickstream navigation is achieved." (Office Action, page 3). However, the clickstream correlator value of Claim 1 contains neither part of an advertising tag as described in Landsman (i.e., it is neither an AdController instantiated at a client, nor is it a web address of an advertising management system).

Landsman also contains no description whatsoever that when a client computer receives the clickstream correlator value in an annotated message from the server computer, it then transmits the clickstream correlator value back to the server computer with subsequent ones of the related messages.

Although Landsman does disclose that the AdController on the client may be used to provide "client-side" accounting of "user impression", it distinguishes its "client-side" accounting as being "in sharp contrast to conventional server-based accounting of web advertisements". (Landsman, Col. 13, lines 34-37, emphasis added). Accordingly, Landsman is not concerned with server-based accounting, and does not teach or suggest using a clickstream correlator value at a server computer to collect clickstream data that is indicative of how a user at a client computer interacts with content at the server computer, as recited in Claim 1.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 is patentable over Landsman.

Independent Claims 17 and 27 have been amended to include analogous recitations to Claim 1, and are submitted to be patentable over Landsman for the reasons provided above.

Dependent Claims 2-16, 18-26, and 28-36 are patentable at least per the patentability of the independent claims from which they depend. Moreover, Applicants submit that these claims provide further bases for patentability, as will now be explained below.

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For example, Claims 3, 18, and 28 include analogous recitations that the clickstream correlator value is used to correlate at the server computer stored log entries created for the related messages, which is neither taught nor suggested by Landsman.

Claims 5, 20, and 30 include analogous recitations that the clickstream correlator value that is determined by the server computer is automatically returned from the client computer to the server computer with subsequent ones of the related messages, which is neither taught nor suggested by Landsman.

Claims 8, 22, and 32 include analogous recitations that at least one of the annotated messages is a request from the client computer for a web page. Landsman does not disclose transmitting annotated messages from a client computer to a server computer, and, consequently, does not disclose or suggest the recitations of these claims.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the above-entitled application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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